



Meridian Public School District

Office of the Superintendent

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March 22, 2023

Via Electronic Mail

Hon. Henry T. Wingate
United States District Court Judge
wingate_chambers@mssd.uscourts.gov

Re: *Barnhardt, et al. v. Meridian Public School District*;
Civil Action No. 4:65cv1300-HTW-LGI

Dear Judge Wingate:

The purpose of this communication is to inform you of the Meridian Public School District's intention to move forward with re-configuring the elementary campuses in the District for the 2023-2024 school year. During our discussion regarding re-configuration of middle schools for the 2022-2023 school year, I shared that the District would consider making recommendations for changes to our elementary schools in the coming months. We are now at that point.

Currently, the District is operating six elementary school campuses. However, due to aging facilities (average age is 60 years old), declining student enrollment, the hardship involved in operating too many buildings for the number of students we serve and the District's desire to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars, we are proposing the following plan:

- Close Oakland Heights Elementary and move those students to a better facility (once known as Carver Middle School). Carver Middle School will reopen as an elementary school.
- Close T.J. Harris Elementary and divide those students between Carver Elementary and Crestwood Elementary School.
- The Harris Upper campus would become the Central Office. A portion of the Central Office staff is already located on that campus. This would allow parents to go to one location to seek assistance or services from District personnel.
- The Harris Lower campus would be the Little Wildcat Academy for all PreK students. The District would also like to expand services at this location to educate 3 and 4 year olds.
- The other elementary campuses would not be impacted by the elementary reconfiguration plan at this time: Parkview, Poplar Springs, and West Hills.

Because the District is making a heavy investment in safety and security upgrades to the campuses using bond and ESSER funding, any renovations needed at Carver to transition it to an elementary school will be covered by this funding.

EXHIBIT

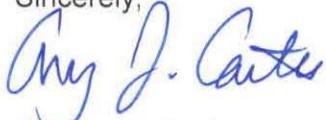
2

Over the past few weeks, the administration has worked diligently to host community conversations about the proposed plans. The District and School Board hosted meetings with parents, faculty, staff, and administrators, concerned citizens known as the Carver Coalition, the Meridian City Council, and stakeholders throughout the City to solicit feedback and input before taking the recommendation to the School Board for final approval. The feedback from these conversations and meetings has been incredibly positive, and the Carver Coalition is particularly excited about students returning to the Carver campus.

As a result, I am informing you and the necessary parties that I recommended the proposed plan for approval on March 21, 2023. The School Board once again felt it was educationally sound and made economic and practical sense to approve the reconfiguration plan for our elementary schools and voted to approve plan as proposed.

The District will be presenting a formal motion to modify its desegregation plan with respect to the elementary reconfiguration plan in the near future. We look forward to working cooperatively and expeditiously with the Court and the Parties in this effort.

Sincerely,



Dr. Amy J. Carter,
Superintendent of Education

cc: Natasha Merle (nmerle@naacpldf.org)
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